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## The Naval War College

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## THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE

An article by

*Vice Admiral D. B. Beary, U. S. N.*

A Board recently met in the Navy Department to select a group of officers of demonstrated ability to attend the next 10-month course at the Naval War College. This course will start at Newport, Rhode Island, on August 12, 1949. Here, while free from the pressure of everyday military duties, the selected officers will study the art and science of war in its broadest aspects. Through the study and solution of military problems they will have the opportunity to improve their ability to think, to increase their professional stature, and thus to prepare themselves for the duties and responsibilities of high command. Any officer fortunate enough to be selected for this assignment can look forward to one of the most interesting and profitable years of his entire career.

Perhaps it is significant that when the Naval War College was established in 1884 the Industrial Revolution was just hitting its stride. The full impact of steam, electricity and the internal combustion engine was only beginning to be felt. There followed a swift march of scientific and industrial events that brought with it the telephone, radio and the fulfillment of Man's long urge to fly. This coupled with the development of mass armies, powerful navies of great mobility, great air fleets, and later, atomic energy, has resulted in revolutionary changes in the techniques of warfare. The total effect of all these factors threatens to overwhelm military thought and cause it to lose pace. The military student is tempted

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Admiral Beary is President of the Naval War College. Prior to assuming his duties at the Naval War College he served as Commandant Twelfth Naval District and Commander Western Sea Frontier. During the war he commanded Service Squadron Six in the Pacific and the Operational Training Command in the Atlantic.

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to become so preoccupied with the study of technical developments in weapons that he is in danger of losing his breadth of vision. Under these circumstances military thinkers may forget that weapons are merely the implements of war and ignore the continued need for a profound understanding of the overall strategy of war. They may overlook the fact that, throughout the remarkable scientific and industrial advance of the past few generations, two factors have remained constant—the human mind and the geography of the Globe.

The mind of Man is still the motivating force behind all weapons, and our preoccupation with atomic energy should not blind us to this fact. The pattern of future victories and defeats will continue to originate in that imperfect human machine which has followed much the same pattern of behavior since Man first learned to fight.

The second constant, the geography of the Globe, is also most important. Land is still the habitat of Man, and so long as it remains so, the final objectives of war will be land objectives. Nor have the seas that cover three-fourths of the surface of the Earth ceased to be an important factor in modern civilization. Sea power is the instrument with which Man has been able to adapt the broad sea expanses of the Globe to his own uses. Sea power means ships—ships that carry airplanes, ships that carry projectiles (and, in the foreseeable future, guided missiles), ships that carry armies and the logistics necessary to support war; and above all, ships that carry the great bulk of world trade, the backbone of modern civilization in peace and in war.

The decisive weapon of modern sea power is air power. That decisive combination known as sea-air power is a weapon whose potentialities have only begun to become apparent. Today no section of the Globe, however remote, can be considered insulated from

the influence of this sea-air weapon. As our technological know-how continues to expand, the ways in which the broad sea areas of the Globe can be used in peace and in war will inevitably multiply.

Thus in an age when our attention is centered on spectacular scientific advances there is greater need than ever to clarify our thinking on the fundamentals of war and the problems of command. The quality of the commander is a decisive factor in the conduct of war. It is still he, the commander, who must do the planning for war. It is still he who must direct and coordinate the weapons of war. It is still he upon whose ability will hinge victory or defeat. The Naval War College has long been dedicated to the task of insuring that qualified officers of all services who attend its courses are given the opportunity to attain the breadth of understanding and vision so essential to victory in war. While there, our future commanders are able to study the strategy, tactics and logistics of sea power and to relate the role of sea power to the broader field of global warfare.

The Naval War College conducts three courses, the Senior and Junior courses in Strategy and Tactics and, of equal importance, the Logistics course. All courses are closely integrated with one another. The curriculum includes a study of weapons, geography, international relations, intelligence, communications, all phases of logistics, and atomic energy. The strategic problems are joint problems, involving not only all branches of the armed services but also various other agencies of government.

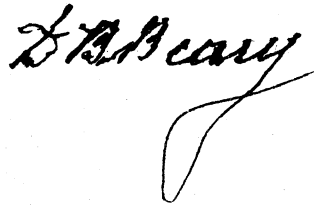
New developments and new ideas are weighed and discussed in an atmosphere of complete freedom of thought and speech. No dogma, doctrine or preconceived formulae with which to achieve victory are taught. Officers of all services are encouraged to express themselves freely in the numerous critiques and discussion periods scheduled throughout the course. Differences of opinion and divided

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conclusions are encouraged rather than discouraged. They are considered stimulating and helpful in our search for solutions to the pressing and puzzling problems we face today. Without these honest differences, freely expressed, there would exist a fatal weakness within our entire military establishment. No individual or group of individuals is expected to go along with the popular current of opinion. Each is free to reach his own conclusion based on his own logic and the facts as he has been able to determine them. Each is required to think for himself and to apply his own reasoning power to the solution of military problems.

The philosophy of the Naval War College can be summed up in the simple statement that we must never permit our thinking to become static. There must be a constant boil and ferment of new ideas. Old ideas and concepts must be subjected to the most careful scrutiny. Newer and better solutions to our problems must always be sought, and when they are found, there must still be the dissatisfaction of knowing there are better answers yet to be found.

The Naval War College is the catalytic agent through which officers, who possess the energy and the perspective, can achieve that mental stature so essential to the exercise of high command.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. B. Cary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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